SCHOLARS' NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS ON APPLICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ANNOTATION IN DIGITAL HUMANITIES

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Abstract: Annotating is one of the most primitive scholarly activities. However with the latest development of web technologies and especially Semantic web technologies there are new evolving forms of annotation and possible new benefits which annotation can contribute. Current study aims to explore how digital humanities use annotation in digital world, how the way of annotation application in digital context reflects scholars habits to annotate printed documents, what issues scholars encounter in using digital annotation, what anticipations and preferences scholars have regarding the future development of annotation tools.

Keywords: annotation, digital humanities, digital tools, semantic annotation
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### Introduction

With the development of digital humanities field the question of infrastructure is becoming increasingly important. Establishment and development of digital tools should be held in close relation to digital humanities perspective.

The development of Semantic web technologies opens up new perspectives in annotation development. Annotation is considered as means for creating user-generated metadata. This in turn facilitates enrichment of the Semantic web with structured knowledge. The employment of annotation in this sense plays a significant role in contribution to the Web of Data and progress in searching, retrieval and navigation capabilities of information systems. On the whole this process influences development of digital humanities infrastructure which needs to be "comfortable" and sustainable platform for carrying out and succeeding in research. Therefore appropriate decisions and developments have to be implemented taking into account digital humanities vision, perception and style of research.

Current study aims to explore how digital humanities use annotation in digital world, how the way of annotation application in digital context reflects scholars habits to annotate printed documents, what issues scholars encounter in using digital annotation, what anticipations and preferences scholars have regarding future development of annotation tools. The study is intended to enlighten users needs in order to contribute annotation development and provide developers with new ideas for improvement of existing systems.

### Methods

**Qualitative research**
- **Survey**
- **Web-based questionnaire**

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27 responses for the period from April 22, 2013 to May 16, 2013

### Findings

#### How scholars annotate
- Adding notes
- Highlighting
- Commenting
- Bookmarking
- Tagging

Semantic annotation
- 63% of respondents declared that they have never used semantic annotation in their work. The reasons behind: unawareness about such systems existence; absence of an appropriate annotation system, net of users or time to learn how to use it.

#### Systems used
- Zotero
- Evernote
- Diigo

**Collaboration**
- 81% positive responses on annotation usage in scientific collaboration
- Main tools:
  - eMail & GoogleDocs

**Needs & Expectations**
- Easy-to-use; Interoperability with Word processors, PDF readers and cloud based services;
- Data integration into one space; System capable to let users organize, track, archive, search and retrieve annotations; Semantic layer behind an annotation.

**Conclusion**

Collected data showed that besides annotating in Word processors and PDF editors, scholars use web-based information management systems such as Zotero, Evernote, Diigo and others. Basic annotating practices such as adding notes, comments and highlights still stay the most valuable in professional work.

Most digital humanities scholars are not aware of semantic annotation and its features, but demonstrate an interest and need for more sophisticated and at the same time user-friendly system that could help them integrate information resources and annotate objects smoothly from different locations, creating one information environment. Users' expectations concern improvements of annotation systems usability, interoperability with various file types and cloud services, customizability and functionality.

### References:


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